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Eminem 'Wanted To Connect With Radio Audience' With 'Recovery,' Manager Says

Reaction to album 'has been gratifying' to rapper, Paul Rosenberg says.

By Gil Kaufman

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With a [article id="1644599"]five-week chart run for *Recovery*[/article] that shows no signs of abating and sales of 2 million just over the horizon, Eminem has been on a winning streak lately. His hit [article id="1644486"]duet with Rihanna on "Love the Way You Lie"[/article] has topped charts and given Slim Shady one of the biggest non-satirical crossover pop hits of his career, but according to longtime manager Paul Rosenberg, the path to success had plenty of obstacles.

Rosenberg spoke to

target="_blank">*HITS* magazine and said the title of *Recovery* had a very literal meaning for the MC, who has openly spoken about his struggle with prescription drug addiction. After admitting that he made his 2004 album, *Encore,* in the throes of drug addiction and that last year's *Relapse* was part of the process of flushing the drugs out of his system, *Recovery* was about taking a step forward.

"Em was certainly gaining his footing after not being sober for awhile," Rosenberg said. "It took him a bit to get on stable ground and figure out what he wanted to do. After almost overdosing, everything looks and sounds different to you. He was really thrust back into the game and had to adjust."

Rosenberg sidestepped a question on whether he agreed with the rapper's assessment that *Encore* and *Relapse* weren't Eminem's finest work. "With respect to *Relapse,* we were just excited that he was focused and recording music again, that we could get the record out there and not make the fans wait any longer," he said. "And I think we accomplished that. He's a little hard on himself. Even at his worst, Eminem is still far better than most. He wants everything he does to be received on that level of excitement, wonderment and anticipation as his first couple of albums."

Saying Em was "really" smart in realizing what went wrong with those releases, Rosenberg said his star client has a clear understanding that his audience wants to connect emotionally to his music and realized he hadn't done that recently and needed to get back into that mode. "His mission was to create songs that would accomplish that. It's just good to see that when you make something great, people are still there for it. You can take a misstep, but you can still get back on track."

As for why Marshall deviated from his previous method of working with mentor Dr. Dre on *Recovery,* which only features one Dre production, Rosenberg said once the original plan to do a *Relapse* sequel was dropped, Em realized he'd turned a musical corner and wanted to keep moving in that direction.

"When Em started working with Dre on sessions for the second record in Hawaii, he turned a corner artistically," Rosenberg explained. "And at that point, he wanted to keep moving in that new direction. So it was an evolution. ... By the time Marshall started focusing on making a new album, Dre was already working on his own stuff. So we reached out to Just Blaze first, worked on several tracks with him, and that opened the door to the other producers – Boi-1da, DJ Khalil. Those three are the guts of the record. It was a natural progression, a matter of timing."

Not surprisingly, Rosenberg said Em is very happy with how his latest album has been received and the [article id="1642772"]smash sales he's racked up so far[/article]. "He's really happy with it," he said of the rapper, who has [article id="1642390"]come out of his shell a bit to promote the album[/article] with some viral videos and rare TV appearances. "He put a lot of work into it. He thought it was what people would be looking for, so the reaction has been gratifying. That his fans love it is the most important thing to him. Em feels he let people down because he didn't give what he felt he needed to give them. That's what drove him to make this album."

As for "Love the Way You Lie" giving Slim Shady his biggest crossover hit since the "8 Mile" smash "Lose Yourself," Rosenberg said the tune was an attempt to reach that elusive wider audience. "Em wanted to connect with a radio audience this time," he said. "He realized the last time that it didn't make it all the way like he wanted it to. He certainly had that in mind making this album." For now, Rosenberg said, there are no plans for a major tour and Em will stick to the two [article id="1642338"]co-headlining gigs he's got booked with Jay-Z[/article] in New York and Detroit and an appearance at the Epicenter Festival in Fontana, California. "We don't have anything else booked," he said. "He loves performing, but he doesn't love traveling, so we try to figure out a way to make that work. We'd like to find ways he can perform without going to different cities."